/The New Uighurs/

563 [184] [583] [584] [586] [589] The Sinkiang nomad must buy his bride with a bride-price, but the sedentary Sinkiang bride is given away by her father. In addition he even pays all wedding expenses. Marriages are arranged by a "go-between", who usually occupies a higher social position than either the bride or groom's families. As in all Moslem communities, divorce is a relative simple matter for the male. Therefore, a considerable number of women without family attachments are present in all Uighur communities. These unattached women are usually engaged in employment as tailors, cooks, or weavers, and thereby form a distinct social unit. As a rule they are identified with the household of their employer.

563 62 182 [181] In general, all Uighurs are individualistic in character. However, the structure of the community with its irrigational problems gives them a collectivist outlook on life in parts. The families that form such an Uighur community are by no means bound together by kinship obligations. Their communal cooperation rests exclusively on the fact that without collective effort and labor the community would perish.

563 [561] Prior to 1949, no organized youth groups existed in Uighur communities, since in any Islamic community the male child begins to participate in the activities centered around the mosque at a very early age. All other youth groups were discouraged. The young Uighur man becomes a full member of the community at the time of his marriage. He will receive title to any land or water rights only upon the decease of the eldest male member of his family. Until then both he and his wife work as members of the extended family group. A young merchant usually will act as his father's representative until the father's retirement from business affairs or his death.

[585] [885]

563 441 Merchants are bound together in "guilds". However, these associations are not official institutions but were natural outgrowths of the merchants' self-protecting interests. Should any member of the community be guilty of not paying his debts, he will be prosecuted by the members of such a "guild", even though he may have moved to another community. In each locality or city, the merchant's "guild" is organized under the leadership of an aqsaqal, who functions as a public official.

563 166 241 425 Individuals of the Uighur community who do not inherit any land, move to non-irrigated areas which nevertheless show possibilities of being irrigable. These new irrigation projects are usually undertaken as the collective effort of several families who move as a group to such a new area. This practice may explain population increases in Uighur occupied areas.

563 178 New industries and the further development of natural resources may have some influence upon Uighur social structure, since these factors increase the wealth of both the

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THE FAMILY

S N 121 59 563 I. Introduction

Northwest China is heavily populated by national minorities. In the province of Sinkiang, the Chinese even form a minority group and the Turkic Moslems constitute the majority. Therefore, in a discussion of the family in this area, general statements applying to the population as a whole would not apply, but a distinction has to be made between several different ethnic elements.

For the purposes of the present section, the following rough division suggests itself: (a) Turkic sedentary Moslems; (b) Turkic nomadic Moslems; (c) the Dungans or Chinese Moslems; (d) the Tibetans; (e) the Mongours; (f) the Mongols, and (g) the Chinese. The last two groups are discussed in detail in their respective handbooks, the IMAR Handbook and the General Handbook of China.

S N 779 59 183 581 Among all Moslems Islam forms the ideal concept of the family. In Islamic society the institution of the family has always been one of primary importance. The family is considered the basic essential of human civilization. Having a family, and being a dutiful member of one, is not only regarded as necessary, but is expressly a religious obligation. Marriage, the step leading to the establishment of a family, is a sacred contract into which each Moslem must enter. A Moslem who, without just reason, does not marry and does [589] not establish a family, is considered almost as a heretic.

S N 59 182 [554] [589] The family's function is primarily for reproduction of the group and the continuation of the family. The institution of the family, furthermore, provides security and peace of mind for its members. The family man is respected and esteemed in Moslem society; he is considered honorable and trustworthy. An unmarried man is likely to be looked upon with some suspicion and distrust.

S N 59 779 183 Since the family plays such a significant role in Moslem society, there is great emphasis on its unity and closeness. This is probably best expressed in the following quotation from the Koran, "...and Allah has made wives for you from yourselves and has given you sons and daughters from your wives." This closeness resulting from the blood relationship is extended to all other phases of family life.

S N 593 Love and compassion should underlie all the relationships within the family. In relations between a man and his wife, or wives, between one kin to another, love is stressed as the basis.

S N [829] A man's behavior within his family reflects his attitude toward society as a whole. If there is love in his heart for his family, he will also have compassion for others and be of service to society.

S N 592 593 In the family, the man's position is always superior to that of the woman, regardless of his age. The wife is, accordingly, put in an inferior position to that of her husband, being under his control completely. The head of the house holds unquestioned authority